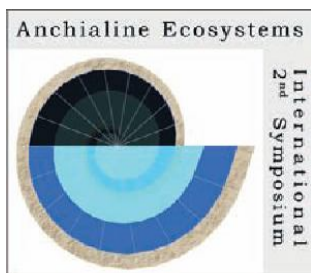


PREFACE



The challenging hydrological, geochemical and biological complexity of subterranean estuaries and their anchialine habitats will gather, again, the researchers that work on various domains of these unique environments. This Special Issue of *Natura Croatica* contains extended abstracts of some of the papers that will be presented at the 2nd International Anchialine Symposium, to be held in Cavtat, Croatia (3–6 October, 2012).

The aim of this second meeting is to stimulate communication between the scientists and to further promote the necessity of a multidisciplinary approach to these valuable, but vulnerable ecosystems, as initiated by the 1st symposium »*Anchialine ecosystems: Reflection and prospects*« that was held in Palma de Mallorca, Spain (17–20 November, 2009). Therefore, the abstracts within this issue, listed together in alphabetical order by the first author, cover the whole spectra of topics listed below:

- Geology, Paleontology and Speleology
- Morphology and development
- Hydrogeochemistry
- Biotic community assemblages
- Phylogenetics and historical biogeography
- Biodiversity and evolution
- Trophic dynamics and ecosystem functioning
- Ecosystem protection and education
- Physiology and behaviour

Although we are aware that it would be somewhat premature to predict the success of the 2nd Symposium, the quality of the research presented in this volume of *Natura Croatica*, together with a distinguished group of leading scientists that will attend this symposium, allow us to believe that our expectations will be fulfilled.

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August, 2012

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